

**AMERICAN BLOOD**  
**TO THE SHORES OF TRIPOLI**

CHAPTER 1

"PATERFAMILIAS"

written by

Chris Knauer

Based on true events

e: [cjknauer@gmail.com](mailto:cjknauer@gmail.com)  
w: [chrisknauer.com](http://chrisknauer.com)

**EXT. TRIPOLI CASTLE - NOON - ESTABLISHING**

A fortress. As old and wind-battered as a desert rock. Its forty-foot walls loom over a placid harbor.

**SUPER: TRIPOLI, CAPITAL OF TRIPOLITANIA, JULY 20, 1790**

**EXT. TRIPOLI CASTLE - CASTLE GROUNDS**

HASSAN KARAMANLI (30), colorfully-robed with a rakish swagger, saunters along a sandy path. His SABER rattles in its scabbard.

Two GUARDS flank the arched entryway of an isolated, stonecrafted building. They bow as Hassan passes into the--

**HAREM**

Dim light filters into an empty courtyard through an iron-grated ceiling. A stone fountain gently burbles. All else is silent. A flicker of uncertainty passes over Hassan's face.

He moves across the courtyard, steps through a curtain, and--

--stops in his tracks. SIX MOORISH SLAVES in white robes block a door at the end of the hall. A slave clocks the saber.

AFRICAN SLAVE

Your excellency. We must ask you to remove your saber. You cannot enter while armed.

HASSAN

Who are you to tell me what I can and cannot do? My brother might be your master, but he is not mine. Step aside.

They part. Hassan struts past them and opens the door to--

**HALLUMA'S APARTMENT**

The apartment is elegantly-decorated: Turkish rugs, ornate tiles, silk curtains. No expense has been spared.

HALLUMA KARAMANLI (47), statuesque, beams at Hassan. She moves to embrace him, but her face sinks when she sees the saber.

HALLUMA

You cannot bring that into my home. It is forbidden.

YUSUF KARAMANLI (24), stands at a slatted window. Slices of light and shadow make his broad face an indecipherable mask. His blubbery lips curl into a grin as he turns toward Hassan.

YUSUF

You would disrespect our mother by bringing a weapon into her home? Shameful. Do you consider yourself above our sacred laws, brother?

HASSAN

It is always wise to arm oneself when dealing with a snake.

(off Halluma's look)

Very well. I'll remove the saber for our mother's sake. But I will not place it outside.

Hassan marches over to Yusuf. They stand face to face. Hassan is taller, but Yusuf is stronger.

Without breaking eye contact, Hassan unties the sash, grabs the hilt of his saber, and, after a long beat--

--places the saber on the windowsill. Yusuf smirks.

HALLUMA

Please, sit.

They take a seat across from one another. Halluma sits on the sofa between them, both a mediator and a barrier.

HALLUMA (CONT'D)

It pains me to see the two of you always at each other's throats. Let this finally be a day of reconciliation.

(beat)

Yusuf. You arranged this meeting. What is it you wish to say?

YUSUF

I wish to put an end to our conflict and recognize Hassan as the rightful ruler of our kingdom. I pledge my loyalty to you.

HASSAN

The only conflict is that which you have sowed.

(off Halluma's nudge)

But I'm willing to embrace your loyalty if it brings an end to your scheming. I assume you want something in return? A city? A castle?

YUSUF

All I ask is that you respect the line of succession. Until you father a son, our brother Hamet is next in line. Followed by me.

Hassan raises an eyebrow. *Wait. That's it?*

HASSAN

That is the law of our land. I will, of course, respect it.

YUSUF

(re: saber)

You will forgive me for doubting your respect for our laws.

HASSAN

And you will forgive me for doubting your good intentions.

They share a smile. It feels like they've turned a corner.

YUSUF

Come, let us pledge our friendship by placing our hands on the Koran.

HASSAN

With all my heart, I am ready.

Halluma is elated. She squeezes her son's hands. Yusuf stands and turns toward the door.

YUSUF

(calling loudly)

Bring me the Koran.

The door swings open. A Moorish slave enters carrying a silver tray. But it's not a Koran on the tray...

it's TWO PISTOLS.

Yusuf grabs the jewel-handled pistols and aims them at Hassan.

HALLUMA

Yusuf! No!

Halluma instinctively thrusts her hand in front of the pistols.

CRACK!

The first pistol misfires. The barrel EXPLODES. Shrapnel tears through Halluma's outstretched hand. She screams.

The errant bullet STRIKES Hassan in the side. A glancing blow.

Hassan lurches off the sofa and stumbles toward the saber on the windowsill. He grabs it. Unsheathes it. Turns and--

CRACK!

Smoke curls out of Yusuf's second pistol. Hassan looks down. A crimson blossom of blood stains the robes over his heart.

Hassan collapses. The saber CLATTERS against the tile floor. Halluma throws herself on top of him. He struggles for breath.

HASSAN  
(choking, halting)  
Mother? You allowed this betrayal?

Halluma, sobbing, shakes her head.

Yusuf struts over to the open door and calls to his slaves.

YUSUF  
Here lies the bashaw! Finish him.

Yusuf's slaves, now armed with pistols and swords, rush into the room. They circle Hassan and aim their pistols at him. Halluma sprawls across his body. A slave kicks her away.

Halluma claws back toward Hassan, her mangled hand leaving a trail of blood on the tile. She reaches out to him when--

CRACK! CRACK! CRACK! CRACK! CRACK! The slaves all fire.

FROM ABOVE: Blood pools across the tile floor. Streams form in the tiles' grooves, spidering out like a geometric tributary.

Halluma crumples. She screams. Louder. And louder. Until--

CUT TO BLACK:

*INTRO: An empty expanse of yellow parchment. A drop of blood splashes onto the center of the page. The blood spreads and forms the outline of a map. It highlights important geographic areas: the 15 US colonies, the Mediterranean Sea, Tripoli, Tunisia, Malta, and the web of trade routes that connect them.*

**TITLE: AMERICAN BLOOD: TO THE SHORES OF TRIPOLI**

**EXT. MOUNT VERNON - SUNSET - ESTABLISHING**

A pastoral, colonial manor. The white clapboard siding glows like gold in the dying light of the wintry day.

**SUPER: MOUNT VERNON, HOME OF GEORGE WASHINGTON, DECEMBER 14th, 1799**

**INT. MOUNT VERNON - WASHINGTON'S BEDROOM**

CLOSE ON: BLOOD trickles down a pale arm and DRIPS into a white bowl held aloft by a pair of liver-spotted hands. As we PULL BACK we see that the hands belong to DOCTOR CRAIK (72).

Propped up in bed beside Craik is GEORGE WASHINGTON (67). Despite the blood trailing down his arm and a sickly pallor, his clenched jaw and 6'3" frame give him a commanding presence.

CRAIK

That will do for now.

Washington nods. Craik sets the brimming bowl on the nightstand. It CLINKS against *two more* full bowls of blood.

Craik unties the tourniquet and bandages the incision.

WASHINGTON

(rasping)

Mr. Lear.

TOBIAS LEAR (37), a slight man with the puffed-up posture of a politician, peels away from the far wall and scurries over.

LEAR

Yes, sir?

Washington gives Craik an unmistakable look - *a little privacy, please?*

CRAIK

Ah. Yes. Perhaps it would be best if I brewed a pot of that sage and vinegar tea for your throat, sir.

Craik EXITS. Washington pushes his covers aside and sits up on the edge of the bed. He gets unsteadily to his feet. He hobbles to the window and looks out over his estate.

WASHINGTON'S POV: The yard looks cold and barren in the winter dusk. A bright red CARDINAL hops along a fence.

Lear joins him at the window. He looks out, trying to see what Washington might be seeing. *Nothing interesting.* After a beat--

LEAR

Sir...?

WASHINGTON

I find I am going. My breath can not last long. I believed from the first that this disorder would prove fatal.

(MORE)

WASHINGTON (CONT'D)

(beat)

Do arrange and record all my late military letters and papers. Arrange my accounts and settle my books. You know more about them than any one else.

(read between the lines)

Do you understand?

LEAR

Yes, of course. Perfectly. I will see to the proper arrangements.

Washington continues to stare out the window. Lost in thought.

WASHINGTON

I die hard. But I am not afraid to go.

REVERSE: The cardinal pecks at the fence. In the BG Washington watches from the second-story window. Abruptly, the cardinal takes to the sky.

HARD CUT TO:

**EXT. MOUNT VERNON - MORNING**

The home's green shutters are all tied shut with black ribbon.

THOMAS DAVIS (O.S.)

We stand now on the verge of a new century. A new age.

A somber military procession approaches the house.

THOMAS DAVIS (O.S.)

For these United States, it shall be an age pregnant with hope and opportunity, owing to this man.

A riderless horse, dressed for battle, leads the procession. TWO EMPTY BLACK BOOTS sit backwards in its stirrups.

**EXT. MOUNT VERNON - ESTATE GROUNDS**

A sea of black coats, black hats, and white wigs surround Washington's casket - priests, politicians, freemasons.

THOMAS DAVIS (70), jowly and operatic, clutches a large BIBLE.

THOMAS DAVIS

He, like Moses, said unto the Great King, 'let my people go'.

(MORE)

THOMAS DAVIS (CONT'D)

And through dangers and hardships,  
led his people to freedom and to  
the very brink of this new epoch.

(beat)

General Washington was the  
Paterfamilias of our nation. As  
his children, it is now our solemn  
duty to walk in the path he has  
laid before us. A path that can  
only be illuminated by the light  
of liberty.

(then)

This extraordinary task requires  
us to ask the most vital of all  
questions: who are we? Will we  
carry the light of liberty meekly?  
Or will we carry it with courage  
and tenacity? Our answer to these  
questions will forge the very  
character of our young nation.

MUSKETS FIRE. As we look skyward, we...

DISSOLVE TO:

**EXT. TRIPOLI HARBOR - MORNING**

A bright, clear day. The ocean sparkles. Peaceful. Until--

The hull of a large frigate BURSTS through the waves. As the  
ship passes, we see the name on its stern: "GEORGE WASHINGTON"

The USS GEORGE WASHINGTON cruises across the harbor. Up ahead,  
a familiar castle rests on shore.

**SUPER: TRIPOLI - 9 MONTHS LATER**

The ship sails past a TOWER on shore. CANNONS peek through the  
tower's square windows. This is a GUN BATTERY. There are two  
more just like it along the castle's immense walls.

ON DECK: CAPTAIN WILLIAM BAINBRIDGE (26), poses like a  
Renaissance statue. His uniform is perfectly-pressed and his  
smug face is framed by two ample mutton chops.

BAINBRIDGE

Take us in past the gun batteries.  
Let's give them something to  
admire.

FROM THE GUN BATTERY: The deck of the USS George Washington  
glides beneath the mouths of the cannons.



**EXT. TRIPOLI HARBOR - DOCK**

RICHARD O'BRIEN (42), slim and sweaty, fusses nervously with his coat. A crew of men row a small boat toward the dock.

Bainbridge stumbles as he steps off the boat. He turns and glares at the oarsmen. He's about to scold them when--

O'BRIEN  
 Captain Bainbridge! Welcome to  
 Tripoli. Richard O'Brien, Consul-  
 General and humble servant, sir.

Bainbridge turns, straightens up, and shakes O'Brien's hand.

BAINBRIDGE  
 I am yours. How do you do?

O'BRIEN  
 Well, sir. Although bashaw  
 Karamanli is in a fitful state. He  
 finds the timeliness of his  
 tribute delivery... unsuitable.

BAINBRIDGE  
 I find this entire enterprise  
 unsuitable.

O'BRIEN  
 'Tis the price of peace.

**INT. TRIPOLI CASTLE - COURT ROOM - LATER**

Yusuf Karamanli sits atop a pillowed dais overlooking the court. His oiled beard glimmers as it catches the sunlight.

O'Brien and Bainbridge watch expectantly from below as Yusuf turns a JEWELLED SABER over in his hands. He examines every last lavish detail. He unsheathes it, feels its edge.

He waves one of his Moorish slaves over. The slave bows, eyes the shining steel blade, and gulps. Quick as a flash, Yusuf SWINGS the saber! It knocks the turban off the slave's head.

Yusuf frowns. The slave lets out a sigh of relief.

YUSUF  
 A poor edge. As I suspected.

O'Brien dabs a handkerchief to his forehead.

O'BRIEN  
 I apologize that the blade is not  
 to your taste, your excellency.  
 (MORE)

O'BRIEN (CONT'D)

I assure you that you will not be disappointed with the remainder of your tribute.

YUSUF

I was promised a grand tribute. Is this what is considered 'grand' in your kingdom?

O'BRIEN

We have also delivered barrels of gunpowder, planks for shipbuilding, and goods valuing twenty thousand dollars.

YUSUF

These trifles offend me. Is this what you think I am worth?

Bainbridge boils.

BAINBRIDGE

We have delivered everything you desired as per the terms of our treaty. That you signed.

O'Brien flashes Bainbridge a look - *I'll do the talking.*

YUSUF

You have not fulfilled the terms of the treaty. The planks you delivered are too short. They are worthless for my ships.

(beat)

You will send another shipment. And you will send better gifts. Gifts befitting our friendship.

O'BRIEN

Your excellency, it shall be done. While we arrange for a larger offering, can we agree to a temporary peace?

YUSUF

I have waited long enough. Until I receive proper tribute I cannot guarantee safe passage for American ships in these waters.

Bainbridge erupts like a toddler throwing a temper tantrum.

BAINBRIDGE

We have paid your tribute. At great cost to our nation and to our dignity. You will call off your pirates and you will allow for a peace between our nations.

(beat)

Or we will find a *less amenable* way to pay your tribute.

Yusuf smiles. A devious smile. One we've seen before.

YUSUF

Perhaps we can come to an agreement.

(beat)

Our treaty states that I may make use of American ships for the transport of goods. I have my own tribute to deliver to Constantinople. Deliver my gifts for me and you will have your peace.

O'BRIEN

Your excellency, while we would like to comply, the treaty states that you may only commandeer a *merchant vessel*. The George Washington is a *ship of war*.

YUSUF

Is it? Yet you sent it here to deliver my tribute, did you not?

(beat)

Or perhaps you were hoping to deliver a *different* message by sending a ship of war to my port?

BAINBRIDGE

If that is the message you prefer, I will gladly deliver it with the mouths of my cannons.

Yusuf stands and steps down from the dais. He approaches Bainbridge. Sizes him up.

YUSUF

I'd like to see this George Washington for myself.

**EXT. TRIPOLI CASTLE - CASTLE WALLS - MOMENTS LATER**

Yusuf, Bainbridge, and O'Brien look over the parapet and out into the harbor. The George Washington is anchored offshore.

YUSUF

It's an impressive ship. How many guns?

BAINBRIDGE

Twenty-four guns. One-hundred and eight feet in length. Six-hundred and twenty-four tons. The finest vessel in the Mediterranean.

YUSUF

Just so.

(beat)

You have my gratitude. I rarely have an opportunity to admire war ships in such fine detail. Other captains are never so thoughtful as to weigh anchor within range of my castle.

(then, pointing)

Though I do believe the view would be even finer from atop the gun battery.

And now we see that the George Washington is anchored directly beneath a gun battery, its cannons aimed at the ship's deck.

YUSUF

Your twenty-four guns. Are they loaded? Mine are. And all I must do is--

(raising his arm)

--give them the signal to fire.

Off Bainbridge, going pale as a sheet...

**EXT. TRIPOLI HARBOR - DOCK - LATER**

SLAVES load Yusuf's "gifts" for Constantinople onto the USS George Washington. The gifts include: 4 horses, 150 sheep, 25 horned cattle, 4 antelopes, 12 parrots, 4 lions, and 4 tigers.

Bainbridge fumes as he watches the outrageous procession.

BAINBRIDGE

They've reduced the George Washington to a floating zoo. Strike the name Captain Bainbridge from the lists.

(MORE)

BAINBRIDGE (CONT'D)  
Henceforth they'll name me Captain  
Noah.

O'BRIEN  
You had no choice. We can't afford  
to lose a frigate. Or start a war.

They turn at the sound of CLANGING. KA-CLANK KA-CLANK KA-CLANK!

A column of 100 AFRICAN SLAVES - all women - shuffle onto the  
dock. Their ankle shackles rattle like iron maracas.

O'BRIEN  
Surely they don't expect us to...

O'Brien doesn't finish the thought. He knows the answer.

BAINBRIDGE  
So this is the price of peace? My  
complete humiliation.

Two LABORERS drop a chest at Bainbridge's feet.

BAINBRIDGE  
What is this?

LABORER  
For your mast. Bashaw Karamanli  
has commanded it.

**EXT. USS GEORGE WASHINGTON - DECK**

CLOSE ON: the AMERICAN FLAG. For those counting, this flag has  
15 stars and 15 stripes. The flag lowers out of frame.

ON DECK: SAMUEL TAYLOR (16), a baby-faced midshipman, removes  
the American flag from the mast. He opens the newly-delivered  
chest. He lifts out a folded, green-colored cloth.

He unfolds it to reveal the three crescent moons of the TRIPOLI  
FLAG.

Taylor looks at Bainbridge - *must I?* Bainbridge lowers his  
head. A silent approval.

Taylor attaches the Tripoli flag to the mast, steels himself,  
and raises it. It unfurls majestically in the breeze.

Lieutenant DAVID PORTER (23), tall, square-jawed, and severe,  
spits as he watches the flag climb higher and higher.

The flag reaches the top of the mast. Below, we see the full  
menagerie on deck: animals, slaves, supplies, sailors.

CLOSE ON: A SHEEP reaches its head through its pen and nibbles at the tails of Bainbridge's coat.

**EXT. TRIPOLI HARBOR**

The ship sails out of the harbor and back into the open waters of the Mediterranean Sea.

CLOSE ON: The Tripoli flag waves in the wind. We BOOM DOWN to the stern where we rest, once more, on the painted name of the ship: "GEORGE WASHINGTON"

**EXT. TUNIS - MORNING - ESTABLISHING**

A rust-red lake sits stagnant between the harbor and the sun-bleached city of Tunis.

**SUPER: TUNIS, CAPITAL OF TUNISIA**

**INT. AMERICAN CONSULATE - SITTING ROOM**

JAMES LEANDER CATHCART (34), stout and blotchy, sits on a sofa politely holding a cup of coffee. As he takes a sip--

CRACK! The sound of wood splintering emanates from a nearby room. Cathcart remains unfazed.

Another loud SMASH! And now we hear a MAN'S VOICE, gruff and indignant, shouting incoherently. We catch a few choice words.

MAN'S VOICE (O.S.)  
... such debasement! ... an  
outrage! ... unforgivable sin!

Then we hear a door SLAM and heavy FOOTSTEPS storm toward the sitting room. WILLIAM EATON (37), charges into the room like a Spanish bull entering the arena. His heavy brow, brusque movements, and fiery temperament compound the likeness.

Eaton clutches a LETTER in his iron grip.

CATHCART  
I take this to mean you've  
finished reading the letter?

EATON  
It is not so much a letter as it  
is a eulogy for our nation.

As Eaton paces and launches into his diatribe, Cathcart enjoys his coffee, amused by Eaton's passionate outburst.

EATON  
Ghost of Washington!  
(MORE)

EATON (CONT'D)

Behold your name debased. I never thought to find a corner of this slanderous world where the words 'shame' and 'American' were wedded. But here we are. The byword of derision, quoted as precedents of cowardice. Even by the Danes!

Eaton catches his reflection in a large GRECIAN WALL MIRROR with an ornate gilded frame. He sighs and shakes his head.

EATON (CONT'D)

History shall tell that the United States first offered up a ship of war, fully equipped, as a courier for a pirate. *It is written.* Nothing but blood can blot the impression out. If this is the price of peace, then I frankly own that I would have lost the peace and been myself *impaled* rather than yielded to such concessions.  
(off Cathcart's smile)  
You find this amusing?

CATHCART

I find the subject appalling. Yet I can't help but be amused by your colorful summary of events.

EATON

I'll save my most colorful language for this Captain Bainbridge, should he have the misfortune to cross my path.

CATHCART

You do have a way with words, Mr. Eaton. Where anger makes fools of most other men, anger seems to be your muse.

(standing)

Now, I believe you said that you would rather be impaled than keep the peace? I may have the opportunity.

(off Eaton: go on)

Bey Hamouda has invited us to the Bardo Palace. He would like to discuss the "friendship" between the United States and Tunis.

EATON

No doubt the bey has heard the news of our humiliation and will demand more gifts to keep the peace.

CATHCART

Just so. And should we find the requests reasonable, we must accept them. We cannot afford to have Tunisian pirates ransack our merchant ships and make slaves of our citizens.

EATON

When has any ruler of these godforsaken Barbary states ever proven to be reasonable? No, I will not allow this den of sea robbers to exaggerate our national embarrassment. If we lose the peace, so be it.

**EXT. TUNIS - MEDINA - MORNING**

The medina (aka market) is a dizzying spectacle. Eaton and Cathcart, in their wool coats, arched bicorne hats, and glossy Hessian boots, stand out against the teeming crowds, the mosaic of awnings, and the profusion of colors.

The two statesmen press through the disparate masses, passing MERCHANTS as resplendent as peacocks, MUSLIMS in simple white shifts, and MOORS with their wrapped robes and silk scarves.

It's all as loud as it looks. One can only imagine the smell. Eaton clenches his teeth as he swats at a pestering fly.

CATHCART

(re: flies)

You'll grow accustomed to their incessant presence. But never have I seen them in such quantities as here.

EATON

I take it you've never been to Washington in the summer. There you must battle the plague of flies *and* politicians. It's debatable which is worse.

CATHCART

You're the American Consul-General to Tunis.

(MORE)



CATHCART (CONT'D)

Do you not consider yourself a politician?

EATON

No, I consider myself a soldier on a diplomatic errand.

CATHCART

Is that why you treat every conversation as if it's a battle?

EATON

No. I simply abhor dull conversations.

Cathcart betrays a smile. He can't help but like Eaton despite his bombastic nature and suffocating ego.

CATHCART

I should like to keep our conversation with Bey Hamouda dull. The president has authorized us to offer ten thousand dollars. I believe that will satisfy him.

Eaton gives him a look - *we both know it won't satisfy him.* Before Cathcart can defend his position, a MAN'S SCREAM cuts through the cacophony of the market.

They press through the crowd and arrive at a grisly scene. A SLAVE TRADER whips a WHITE SLAVE'S bare feet with a switch. The slave's ankles are roped to a wooden pole, which is held like a spit between two guards. *The bastinado.*

The slave CRIES OUT in Italian. We don't need subtitles to know that he's begging for the torture to end.

Cathcart winces with each blow. But the market continues on as if nothing is happening. Business as usual.

CATHCART

The bastinado. A cruel punishment.  
(sensing Eaton's anger)  
But it's not our place to interfere. It will be worse for him if you do. *Trust me.*

Cathcart tries to pull him away but Eaton is rooted in place. With each strike, Eaton's anger swells. Until it boils over.

EATON

What did this man do to deserve this torture?

The slave trader, bewildered but curious, pauses.

SLAVE TRADER

What this Christian dog did or did not do is none of your concern, Englishman.

EATON

I'm not *British*. I'm from the United States of America.

SLAVE TRADER

You dress like an Englishman. You stick your nose where it doesn't belong like an Englishman. I see no difference.

The two lock into a stare-down. Tensions rise when--

CATHCART

We apologize for the intrusion. We'll be on our way.

Cathcart steps in, takes Eaton's arm, and pulls him away. But after a few steps they hear the slave trader call out to them.

SLAVE TRADER

You want to know what he did?  
(after they turn)  
He let a fly land in my coffee.

The slave trader roars with laughter. Eaton rips free and lunges at him, stopping inches from the trader's face. The guards drop the bastinado and grab the hilts of their sabers.

EATON

The British believed us to be their slaves. We corrected that error in perception. With blood.  
(beat)  
Do not make the same mistake in underestimating us.

SLAVE TRADER

As you say, *Americano*  
(to his guards)  
Come. We have business elsewhere.

The slave trader turns and walks away. Eaton meets eyes with the slave. Eaton nods, but the slave simply stares back at him, as blank-faced as a cow.

**EXT. BARDO PALACE - ENTRANCE PLAZA - MOMENTS LATER**

The Bardo Palace has the elegant architecture of a mosque, but its white stone walls and turquoise tiles give it a Mediterranean flair.

Eaton, still visibly agitated, stomps across the plaza toward the main palace gates. Cathcart catches up to him.

CATHCART

That was in poor judgment.

Eaton stops and trains his ire upon Cathcart.

EATON

Someone had to put a stop to it.

CATHCART

Don't you understand? You didn't put a stop to it. You sentenced that man to a worse fate.

(with difficulty)

These slave masters... if one of their slaves is dealt a shred of kindness, it is repaid pound for pound with flesh. That poor soul will be beaten bloody. His rations will be revoked. He'll sleep on the ground until his bones feel liable to shatter from the cold.

(pointing at the palace)

If you want to save our citizens from the same fate, start here.

Eaton gnashes his teeth. But before he can speak--

SAPATAPA (O.S.)

Master Eaton and Master Cathcart.

SAPATAPA (20s) sashays toward them wearing silk slippers. He bows deeply, the 'V' of his robes revealing a hairless, oiled chest. His sing-songy voice is in perfect harmony with his exaggerated, performative gestures.

SAPATAPA

Bey Hamouda is expecting you.

**INT. BARDO PALACE - BEY'S COURT - LATER**

HAMOUDA (40s), the bey of Tunis (aka governor), reclines on an overstuffed sofa. His extravagant garments and soft features make him look like a Fabergé egg nested on a display pillow.

He's right at home among the dozens of TRINKETS on display in the somewhat compact room. The space is downright provincial compared to Tripoli's grandiose court room.

Eaton and Cathcart perch awkwardly atop floor pillows. They politely sip coffee. Sapatapa sits across the knee-high table flipping through a SHEAF OF PAPERS. *The treaty.*

Sapatapa rises and slips over to Hamouda. He delicately touches Hamouda's arm and whispers in his ear. They grin. Then--

HAMOUDA

I would like a frigate.

CATHCART

I apologize, your excellency, but that is not possible.

SAPATAPA

You provided the bashaw of Tripoli with a frigate. Do you not consider our friendship to be as valuable?

EATON

It was not *provided*. It was commandeered.

SAPATAPA

Nevertheless, you obeyed. As such, we expect a tribute of equal or greater measure to maintain the terms of our treaty.

(feigned pouting)

We so desperately wish to remain your friends.

EATON

Out of the question. If we give you a frigate then the dey of Algiers will ask for two frigates. Then the bashaw of Tripoli will ask for an entire armada. It is unreasonable and untenable.

CATHCART

What Mr. Eaton means to convey is that, in lieu of a frigate, we are willing to give you ten thousand dollars cash in addition to the gifts detailed in the treaty.

Hamouda furrows his brow in honest confusion.

HAMOUDA

I'm not a merchant. What am I to do with ten thousand dollars?

SAPATAPA

The bey will not be so callously bribed with *cash*. We simply ask for a *gift*.

CATHCART

What reasonable gift would please the bey?

Hamouda sighs like a bored and annoyed teenager.

HAMOUDA

Very well. If you refuse me a frigate then I want the finest jewels your country has to offer.

EATON

(not respectfully)

With respect, if the bey had read the treaty he would know that our country does not have jewels.

SAPATAPA

(chortling)

Master Eaton, rulers do not read. That is a job for a faithful servant like myself.

Sapatapa flashes a lascivious smile at Hamouda. Hamouda grins like an eager boy. He's invigorated now. He puffs up.

HAMOUDA

Do you truly expect us to believe that your country does not possess any jewels? Even your king?

Eaton fumes. *King?* He rises, ready for a fight.

EATON

Our country does not have a king. Nor does it have any gold. Or diamonds. Or anyone who knows how to work them.

SAPATAPA

What are you, then? A parcel of farmers, shepherds, and rustics?

Hamouda and Sapatapa chuckle.

EATON

Yes. Very much so.

Eaton's firm tone quiets the laughter.

EATON (CONT'D)

We do not have castles or monarchies or vaults of riches. Our gold is the fertile soil. Our jewels are the forests, full of the finest timber in the world. Our wealth is derived from our sweat, our blood, and our pursuit of liberty.

(beat)

You wish to name us your enemy? So be it. We will respond in kind. But should you wish to remain our friends, you will share in our prosperity. Open commerce between our nations will bring you far more wealth than any jewels.

(then)

Take this ten thousand dollars. As a symbol of future prosperity.

Hamouda nods. He seems persuaded. Bravo, Eaton. But then--

HAMOUDA

Perhaps you could obtain the jewels from a different country?

Eaton is flabbergasted. He's had enough.

EATON

With ten thousand dollars you can purchase them yourself.

The room goes silent. A tense beat. Finally--

CATHCART

If jewels will satisfy the bey and keep the peace, we accept. We will purchase them from England at once.

SAPATAPA

Excellent. Though purchasing from England will take quite some time, yes? Perhaps there's a small gift you could provide now while we wait for the jewels to arrive?

EATON  
 (through gritted teeth)  
 And what did you have in mind?

As Sapatapa's lips curl into a smile we--

CUT TO:

**INT. AMERICAN CONSULATE - SITTING ROOM - AFTERNOON**

Eaton, arms folded, stares at his reflection in the GRECIAN WALL MIRROR.

We PULL BACK to reveal two TURKS holding the edges of the mirror's ornate frame. They lift it off the wall and carry it out of the room.

The absence of the mirror reveals a large CRACK in the stucco. Eaton stares at the crack as if it's his own reflection.

CATHCART (O.S.)  
 You should be proud.

Cathcart stands in the doorway, a BOTTLE OF WINE in hand.

CATHCART (CONT'D)  
 The peace is preserved and it did not require you to be impaled.  
 (re: wine)  
 Shall we?

Eaton nods. Cathcart grabs two glasses, pops the cork, and gives a heavy pour. He hands Eaton a glass and raises his own.

CATHCART (CONT'D)  
 To the president. To peace. And to a fine glass of port.

They drink, though Eaton's heart is not in it.

EATON  
 I do not feel proud. How can I?  
 There's no dignity in this post.  
 We won our independence from the British only to bow down to the pirate kings of the Barbary States? It cannot continue.

CATHCART  
 Every nation who trades in these waters pays tribute. Even Britain. That is the arrangement. There is no alternative.

EATON

There is always an alternative.

CATHCART

That is not for us to decide.

(sighing)

Can I trust you not to make any rash decisions after I depart?

(off Eaton's interest)

They've decided to ship me off to Tripoli. Seems they've lost faith in O'Brien's leadership. I leave tomorrow.

EATON

("congratulations")

You certainly cannot do a worse job than O'Brien.

Eaton extends his hand. Cathcart grins and shakes it.

CATHCART

Despite all rational judgment, I do believe I'll miss you.

**EXT. SAN PIETRO BAY - MIDNIGHT**

Dark water. A half moon in the night sky. Deathly quiet.

The bow of a ship glides into frame, silent as a shadow.

**EXT. SAN PIETRO - SAME TIME**

The city sleeps. Even under the cover of darkness the city's colorful, southern Italian charm is discernible.

**TITLE: SAN PIETRO ISLAND, OFF THE SOUTHERN COAST OF ITALY**

Overlooking the bay, we see seven sets of white sails approaching. BARBARY CORSAIRS. Shark fins in the dark water.

**EXT. SAN PIETRO BAY - CONTINUOUS**

Fourteen row boats, crewed by TUNISIAN PIRATES, slip toward the city. Pistols and scimitars hang from the pirates' sashes.

**EXT. SAN PIETRO - MOMENTS LATER**

A hundred flashes of light on the horizon. Followed by a roar--

*BA-BOOM BA-BOOM BA-BOOM BA-BOOM*

Cannonballs. A full broadside from all seven corsairs. They SLAM into the city. Stone walls EXPLODE. Roofs COLLAPSE. Stucco SHATTERS. It sounds like a mountain crashing down.



The pirates leap out of their row boats. Then they CHARGE.

In a quick series of shots we see the pirates: BASH in doors, drag CITIZENS from their homes, SHOOT MEN, and RIP clothes off of screaming WOMEN. It's a horrifying and devastating scene.

FROM ABOVE: we TRACK the pirates as they pour into the veins of the city. We move past them, TILT UP to see an elegant villa on the hill, and PUSH IN on a second-story window.

We PASS THROUGH the window into--

**INT. PORCILE VILLA - BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS**

ANTONIO PORCILE (45), a portrait of panic, scrambles to grab everything of value in his bedroom: jewelry, candlesticks, coins. He stuffs it all into a sack.

BARBARA PORCILE (32), royally-plump, bursts into the room. Clutched in her arms is ANNA PORCILE (12), cherubic.

BARBARA

Antonio! What are you doing? We don't have time for that!

ANTONIO

They'll take it all if we don't hide it.

BARBARA

Let them take it!

Antonio continues looting. With his bald head and white nightgown, he looks like the ghost of a flustered burglar.

BARBARA (CONT'D)

Antonio! Look at me. These trinkets aren't important.

He finally stops. He looks at Barbara and Anna.

ANTONIO

I'm not doing this for greed. I'm doing this for you and Anna. We'll need money... in case...

The implication is clear. Barbara clutches Anna tight. In the distance, we hear another thunder of cannonballs.

*BA-BOOM BA-BOOM BA-BOOM*

ANNA

Mom. I'm scared.

Anna buries her head in Barbara's neck. Barbara, fighting back tears, strokes the back of Anna's blonde head.

BARBARA

Shhh. Everything will be all right. They won't hurt us.

But then, from the ground floor--

*BOOM. BOOM. CRASH!*

Barbara and Antonio whip around. *The front door.* We hear a flurry of FOOTSTEPS as pirates hurry inside.

Barbara SLAMS the bedroom door. Antonio lets the sack of valuables slip out of his hand.

The FOOTSTEPS get closer... and closer...

Anna squeezes her eyes shut.

MATCH CUT TO:

**INT. BARBARY CORSAIR - SHIP'S HOLD - DAY**

CLOSE ON: Anna's eyes. Still shut tight. A hatch CREAKS open. Sunlight spills across her face. She blinks her eyes open and recoils from the sudden brightness.

Anna sits on the damp floorboards in the hull of a ship. She's squeezed between other CAPTIVES. Some of them, like Anna, are in their nightgowns. Others are naked. She's the only child.

A BEARDED PIRATE peers down through the open deck hatch. Silhouetted by the light, his shaggy beard looks beastly.

BEARDED PIRATE

Get up, you Christian dogs. We've arrived.

**EXT. TUNIS - STAGNANT LAKE - SOON AFTER**

Black-winged CORMORANTS stand sentry atop half-submerged stone columns. They watch ROW BOATS sludge across the putrid lake below. The row boats creep toward Tunis, each oar stroke cutting through the film of scum on the water's surface.

Anna sits in one of the boats. The bearded pirate and a BLACK-TOOTHED PIRATE man the oars. The black-toothed pirate smiles at Anna, revealing his filthy, rotten teeth.

BLACK-TOOTHED PIRATE

Pretty girl. Look at me. How old are you?

ANNA

Twelve.

The two pirates share a lurid grin.

BEARDED PIRATE

Think Bey Hamouda will claim her?

BLACK-TOOTHED PIRATE

No. The Bey likes them with more hair on their chins.

The bearded pirate throws back his turbaned head and laughs.

**EXT. TUNIS - MEDINA - LATER**

Pirates and JANISSARIES (military police) prod Anna and the other captives forward with sharpened staffs.

Throngs of JEERING PEOPLE swarm the market. They scream and spit and grab at the passing captives.

The same slave trader from earlier stands on a wooden platform in the center of the square. He pulls one of the captives, a NAKED WOMAN, up onto the platform.

SLAVE TRADER

Five hundred piastros!

The auction begins. MEN frantically shout their offers. It's oppressively loud and chaotic. Anna looks for a way out, but there's no escape. She starts to panic. She fights for breath.

And then it's too much. She falls to the ground. She's sure to be crushed in the stampede of people. But then--

A set of burly arms reach through the crowd and grab her. They lift her up. It's the bearded pirate! He throws Anna over his shoulder and presses away from the square.

ANNA

Let go! Put me down!

BEARDED PIRATE

Quiet. You don't want to go where they're going. This way is better.

In the BG the naked woman is dragged off the auction block and disappears into the throng of people.

**INT. BARDO PALACE - BEY'S COURT - LATER**

Anna stands in front of the empty dais. Sapatapa circles her like a wolf. The bearded pirate looks on eagerly.

SAPATAPA

She is quite splendid.

BEARDED PIRATE

Aye. She's the governor's daughter. A true prize.

SAPATAPA

So you have said. Many times.

(beat)

You were wise to bring her here. The bey has no need for her services, but she will secure a handsome price when we ransom her.

(off bearded pirate)

Of which you will receive a share. Now go. Your stench offends me.

**EXT. AMERICAN CONSULATE - ROOF - DUSK**

Eaton, glass of wine in hand, steps to the edge of his flat roof. He looks out over the city below. Square buildings crowd the landscape like a cinder-block coral reef.

The AMERICAN FLAG hangs limp from a flagpole beside Eaton. He leans against the pole and takes a sip of wine.

He's not the only one on a roof. In fact, there are dozens of MUSLIMS climbing to their rooftops. They lay out woven mats. Then they kneel. All facing the same direction - toward Mecca.

In this position, Mecca is behind Eaton. It's almost as if they're praying to him. The worshippers bow then rise. Over and over. Flowing like tall grass in the wind. It's beautiful.

EATON

(sotto)

If only your rulers showed us this same kind of respect.

Eaton raises his glass to them. But before he can drink--

*KNOCK KNOCK KNOCK*

Eaton, surprised, turns and walks to the far side of the roof. He looks over the ledge and sees--

A WOMAN and a CHILD at his door. They KNOCK again. Frantic.

EATON

Hello?

(off their confusion)

Up here.

The woman looks up at him. It's BARBARA PORCILE and her daughter, ANNA PORCILE.

BARBARA

Hello! Is this the United American States Consulate?

EATON

It's the *United States of America*. But yes, you're in the right place.

**INT. AMERICAN CONSULATE - SITTING ROOM - LATER**

Barbara and Anna sit on a sofa. They clutch cups of steaming tea. Anna, thankfully, has been allowed a bath and a change of clothes since we saw her last.

Eaton paces. His face is screwed up in discontent. Barbara is already deep into her story.

BARBARA

There was no real value holding me or my husband. But Anna. In this culture, she's...

(beat, steeling herself)

I thought it would be hopeless. But her captor was willing to negotiate. To secure her freedom, he's given us three months to collect five thousand dollars.

EATON

*Five thousand dollars?* The audacity of these pirates. My blood boils at the thought of it.

BARBARA

We have no means to make the payment. They took everything from us. We've already visited every foreign consulate. Begging for charity. They all turned us away.

(beat)

I admit that we know very little of your United States. But we have been told that you are an honorable nation that values freedom above all else.

(then, leaning forward)

Please, if that is true, then you must help us. If we don't pay...

Eaton looks to Anna. Her golden hair falls around her face as she gives her cup the thousand yard stare.

Eaton paces again. Fuming. Then he clocks the blank wall - and the CRACK in the stucco. He stops. Then firms his resolve.

EATON

I do not have the money on hand.  
 (off Barbara, crestfallen)  
 But being in this home, both the  
 honor of my flag and my own  
 sensibility demand justice.  
 (beat)  
 My country will assume your debt.

Barbara bursts into tears. But the joy is short-lived.

EATON (CONT'D)

What's the matter?

BARBARA

I am overwhelmed by your kindness.  
 But your country is on the other  
 side of the world. How will the  
 money arrive within three months?

Damn. She has a point. But Eaton has made up his mind.

EATON

I have faith in my country. But  
 should they fail to make the  
 payment, then I will stand in as  
 surety for the debt. They won't  
 come for you or Anna. I promise.

BARBARA

Bless you, Mr. Eaton. And bless  
 your United States. I will tell  
 the world about this. Let it be  
 known that the United States is a  
 land of honor and justice.  
 (beat)  
 Come, Anna. Thank Mr. Eaton.

Anna looks like she might say something, but then she buries her face into Barbara's dress.

BARBARA

Anna! Mind your manners.  
 (to Eaton)  
 I'm sorry. She's tired.

EATON

No need to apologize. My daughter  
 does the same when she sees me.  
 (beat)  
 It's late. Where are you staying.  
 I hope it's not too far.

Off Barbara's resigned face we--

CUT TO:

**INT. AMERICAN CONSULATE - BEDROOM - LATER**

Barbara and Anna kneel beside their bed, ready for prayer. Eaton lights a candle on the bedside table.

EATON

Let me know if there's anything you need. My room is just at the end of the hall.

BARBARA

Thank you, again, for everything.

Eaton nods. He reaches the door. Just as he EXITS--

ANNA

(almost a whisper)  
Goodnight.

EATON

Goodnight, Anna.

Eaton closes the door.

FADE TO BLACK:

**OVER BLACK:**

*THWUMP... THWUMP... THWUMP*

**TITLE: TWO YEARS LATER**

*THWUMP... THWUMP...*

**EXT. TRIPOLI CASTLE - CASTLE WALL - MORNING**

CLOSE ON: A wooden pole. An AXE strikes a deep gouge in it.

We PULL BACK to see that it's not just any pole - it's a flag pole. With the AMERICAN FLAG at the top. The castle wall is lined with wooden flag poles. Each bears a different flag: UK, Denmark, Spain, France, Sweden.

A MOORISH SLAVE sets the axe down against a stone parapet. He pauses to catch his breath. He mops the sweat off his face.

He puts both his hands on the pole. Pushes. Pushes with all his strength. Damn. The pole isn't budging.

Defeated, he picks up the axe again. Swings.

THWUMP.

**EXT. TRIPOLI CASTLE - COURTYARD - SAME**

Cathcart marches past the cluster of buildings that ring the interior walls of the courtyard. He arrives at the main castle.

Two TURKISH GUARDS loom in his path. They put their hands on the hilts of their scimitars.

CATHCART

I demand an audience with the  
bashaw.

(off their silence)

It is a matter of extreme urgency.

Useless. He steps forward, but the guards block his path.

Frustrated, Cathcart turns and leaves. But something catches his eye - a VEILED WOMAN. She flashes him a look. *Follow me.*

Cathcart hesitates. Then he follows after her. She leads him down a path beside the castle toward an isolated, stonecrafted building. If this seems familiar, it's because this is the *exact same path* that Hassan took in the opening.

The veiled woman steps inside. Cathcart follows into the--

**HAREM**

Dim light. Iron-grated ceiling. The stone fountain burbles.

But this time the harem isn't empty. There are a dozen VEILED WOMEN and ROBED MEN lounging and quietly chatting.

Cathcart tip-toes around the courtyard, scanning the crowd for the woman. He clocks her slipping through curtains. He sneaks over to the curtains. It's dark beyond them. He steps through.

He emerges to find the veiled woman holding a door open for him. With a final look back, he ENTERS--

**HALLUMA'S APARTMENT**

The veiled woman closes the door, moves past him, and takes a seat next to Halluma Karamanli, also veiled. Cathcart bows.

CATHCART

Lady Halluma. I did not realize...  
I should not be...

HALLUMA

Please sit. Join us for coffee.



Cathcart hesitates. Then he steps over to the sofa and sits. He glances back at the door.

HALLUMA

You can relax. You are safe here.

CATHCART

Even so. Is this not...?

HALLUMA

Forbidden? There are many things that happen behind closed doors in Tripoli that are "forbidden". Yet they happen every day.

(beat, gesturing)

Master Cathcart, this is Lady Uducia. You know the name?

Cathcart glances at UDUCIA KARAMANLI (20s). Her dark, penetrating eyes stare back at him. *Through him*. He gulps.

CATHCART

I'm aware of Lady Uducia and her... situation.

UDUCIA

Then you must also know of my husband and *his* situation. His name is *Hamet*.

It's not a question. Her smoky voice is firm. Direct. Strong. A shiver goes down Cathcart's spine. He shifts in his seat.

CATHCART

Yes. I know of Hamet. And I believe I understand why you've invited me here. I'm sorry. But I cannot be part of this conversation.

Cathcart stands and makes for the door. Neither Halluma nor Uducia move. They expected this. As he reaches for the handle--

UDUCIA

You were a slave in Algiers for ten years. Subjected to brutal torture.

Cathcart stops in his tracks. Turns.

CATHCART

Yes. But it is not a time that I prefer to discuss.

Uducia glides over to Cathcart. She stares into his soul.

UDUCIA

My children and I. We are slaves  
now. Hostages. Confined within the  
castle walls.

(beat)

This veil is hiding more than my  
features.

CATHCART

My heart aches for your situation.  
It truly does. But any  
conversation we have about Hamet  
will be tantamount to sedition.  
The bashaw will have us killed.

HALLUMA

The bashaw has declared war  
against the United States. The  
flag has been removed from the  
castle walls. You are no longer  
bound by civil conduct.

CATHCART

It is my duty to press for peace.  
I believe I can still reason with  
the bashaw.

Halluma stands. She strides to the middle of her tile floor.

HALLUMA

You see this spot? This is where  
my son, Hassan, was murdered.

(beat)

I, too, believed that Yusuf could  
be reasoned with. My foolishness  
was rewarded with this.

Halluma holds up her hand. It's scarred. *Mangled.*

HALLUMA (CONT'D)

Yusuf will stop at nothing for  
power. A power that is not  
rightfully his to possess.

UDUCIA

My husband, Hamet, is in exile in  
Tunisia. He's the eldest son and  
the rightful heir to the throne of  
Tripoli. And so long as Hamet  
lives, he is the only true threat  
to Yusuf's power.

HALLUMA

Master Cathcart.

(MORE)

HALLUMA (CONT'D)

If you help us return Hamet to the throne, you will have peace. On your terms.

Cathcart's wheels are turning. *It's an enticing offer.*

**EXT. TRIPOLI CASTLE - COURTYARD - LATER**

Cathcart steps out of the harem. He blinks as his eyes adjust to the bright, desert sun. When he opens his eyes he sees--

Yusuf Karamanli with a retinue of MOORISH SLAVES and TURKISH GUARDS approaching. They stop a few paces in front of him. It's a lot of muscle for a casual conversation.

YUSUF

Ah, the American consul. I heard you were looking for me. Did you think I was hiding from you in the harem?

Cathcart gulps. *How much does Yusuf know?*

CATHCART

Your excellency. I am glad you found me. I was hoping to speak with you.

YUSUF

I believe I've heard everything you have to say. And I believe you've heard my response.

Yusuf points toward the flag poles on the castle wall. The American flag is gone. The pole that held it is now a stump.

CATHCART

I am certain we can reach an agreement. At least for a temporary peace. I've been authorized to offer gifts--

YUSUF

There will be no negotiating. I demand two hundred and fifty thousand dollars for peace now. And twenty thousand per year to uphold it.

(beat)

Those are the terms.

**INT. CATHCART'S OFFICE - NIGHT**

Cathcart paces. Flickering candlelight makes his shadow dance on the wall. A blank PARCHMENT rests on his wooden desk.

He stops. Looks at the parchment. Shakes his head. Sighs.

Then he slumps into his chair, picks up a QUILL, and - with difficulty - begins to write. He mutters the words aloud.

CATCHART

To Mr. Madison, Secretary of State. My efforts in the Regency of Tripoli have been exhausted. I fear that a peace with Bashaw Yusuf Karamanli is not possible unless we submit to his terms. There is no alternative--

Cathcart's quill stops. He stares at the words.

ANGLE ON: The words "NO ALTERNATIVE".

A long beat. Then he pushes the parchment aside. He pulls a fresh sheet from the stack. He begins again, invigorated.

CATHCART

To Mr. William Eaton, Consul-General to Tunis.

**INT. AMERICAN CONSULATE - SITTING ROOM - MORNING**

In a quick series of shots we see Eaton pull up his boots, throw on his coat, grab his hat, and SLAM the front door.

ANGLE ON: Cathcart's LETTER on the table, the corners of the parchment flitting in the gentle breeze.

**EXT. TUNIS OUTSKIRTS - LATER**

Eaton rides on horseback through the scrappy tents and cracked hovels that line the roads outside the city. His horse kicks up red dust in its wake.

Eaton's horse crests a ridge. Eaton looks out over the land.

EATON'S POV: A green valley. Farmland. The world outside Tunis isn't a desert - it's fertile. Mediterranean.

Then we see a cluster of WHITE TENTS in the distance.

**EXT. HAMET'S CAMP - LATER**

Eaton, sitting high in his saddle, trots his horse into camp. TURKISH GUARDS, identical in appearance to the ones Yusuf keeps in Tripoli, step in front of him.

TURKISH GUARD

Go no further. What is your business here?

EATON

My name is William Eaton, American Consul-General to Tunis. I have an urgent message for Hamet Karamanli.

**INT. HAMET'S TENT - MOMENTS LATER**

Eaton, crouched, ENTERS. Inside, the tent is spartan: rugs, chests, a crate used as a table, and floor pillows for sitting.

There are THREE MEN inside. Each is busy with an activity: one sharpens his scimitar, one reads a book, and one feasts on a bowl of figs.

Eaton examines the three men. *Which one is Hamet?*

EATON

My name is William Eaton. I'm searching for Hamet Karamanli.

MAN EATING FIGS

(still chewing)

You've found him.

A flash of disappointment crosses Eaton's face. But he quickly dismisses it. He approaches the table. Bows.

EATON

Your excellency. I've come to--

MAN EATING FIGS

Not me. Him.

The man eating figs nods over his shoulder. Eaton follows the gesture. His gaze lands on the man reading a book.

HAMET KARAMANLI (30s) is the antithesis of every other bey and bashaw we've seen thus far. He's plainly-clothed in a white robe and turban. He's thin. *And he's actually reading.*

Hamet closes his book and smiles at Eaton.

HAMET

Mr. William Eaton. I am flattered  
by your visit. Sit with me.

*SHWIIIIIIIIIIIIICK. SHWIIIIIIIIIIIIICK.*

The man sharpening the scimitar drags the whetstone across the blade. He stares at Eaton as he does - a thinly-veiled threat.

EATON (CONT'D)

Your excellency. Perhaps you would  
join me for a walk outside?

(re: man with scimitar)

It is rather stifling in here.

Hamet gets the message. He stands.

HAMET

Very well. I could use a walk.  
I've been sitting for too long.

**EXT. HILLSIDE - LATER**

Hamet and Eaton walk together up a hill. Hamet strolls gracefully with his hands behind his back. Eaton trudges. His heavy clothes weighing him down in the heat.

HAMET

(re: Eaton's clothes)

Yours must be a very cold country.

EATON

It can be. It experiences the full  
range of seasons. Cold in the  
winter. Hot in the summer. Not  
like this, though.

HAMET

Even in the deserts?

EATON

We do not have deserts. Our  
country is primarily forests and  
rich farmland.

(beat, considering)

Although there could be deserts in  
the unexplored regions.

HAMET

How fascinating. A country that is  
not fully explored.

They reach the top of the hill. And there, collapsed and partially-buried, is a set of ANCIENT RUINS. Greek? Roman? Older? Hamet bends down and picks up a STONE.

## HAMET (CONT'D)

Thirteen-hundred years ago, the  
Phoenicians ruled over all this  
land. They called this place  
Carthage. Then the Romans came.  
Then the Ottomans. And now  
Carthage is known as Tunis. In my  
country, my grandfather overthrew  
the Ottoman regime. Now my family  
- my brother - rules in Tripoli.

(beat)

This power we derive. It's just  
sand. Shifting from one great dune  
to another.

Hamet drops the stone back into the sand.

## EATON

So that's it, then? You've  
surrendered yourself to this  
pitiful existence? An exile,  
living off the charity of others.

Hamet can't hide his shock at Eaton's blunt delivery.

## HAMET

You do not understand the--

## EATON

I know a whipped dog when I see  
one. Your brother got the better  
of you and forced you from your  
home. And rather than fight to  
regain the throne, you'd prefer to  
cower in the dirt.

## HAMET

Do not mistake my patience for  
cowardice. My brother is quick to  
anger. But he is already cooling.  
Those men in the camp. He sent  
them to escort me to Derne. He has  
given me command of the city.

## EATON

No. He sent his men to kill you.  
You are dead the moment you set  
foot in Tripolitania.

The words hang. Dust and sand blow across the ruins. Hamet  
looks off into the distance. He knows it's true.

HAMET

I may have the rightful claim to the throne, but I have no taste for ruling. I seek wisdom, not power.

EATON

And that is what will make you an ideal ruler. A wise man thinks for all. A greedy man thinks only for himself. Imagine all the good you could do as bashaw.

HAMET

I *imagine* it would be quite good for the United States if I were bashaw. Do not take me for a fool, Mr. Eaton. Our countries are now at war. You seek to make me bashaw in order to secure peace at the lowest cost to your nation.

(beat)

I have no desire to play the part of the puppet.

EATON

Even if it means securing freedom for your wife and children?

A gust of wind whips and whistles through the ruins.

HAMET

Even if I agree, the task is impracticable. I have no army. No money. No strategy. Tripoli is a stronghold. My brother commands an army of janissaries and a fleet of gunboats. I could never hope to defeat him.

EATON

No, but you would have an ally. The United States will back you. We will bring our army, our navy, and all the supplies you need. We will fight alongside you every step of the way.

(beat)

When we succeed, we will not only bring freedom to your family. We will bring a new era of freedom to this land.



HAMET

I find myself inspired by your passion. But I am not the man you wish me to be. I'm sorry.

Eaton sighs and walks away. Then he stops.

EATON

I've secured passage for you on a boat that will take you to Malta. They set sail at dawn. If you find your courage before then, it will be waiting. Farewell, Hamet.

Eaton continues down the hill. Hamet frowns, considering.

**EXT. AMERICAN CONSULATE - DUSK**

Eaton, dusty and sticky with sweat, walks toward the American Consulate. As he turns a corner he sees--

Sapatapa, flanked by two ARAB GUARDS, waiting for him.

SAPATAPA

Master Eaton. You look as though you've been quite busy.

**INT. AMERICAN CONSULATE - SITTING ROOM - LATER**

Sapatapa stirs sugar into his coffee. Eaton sits across from him, visibly annoyed by each TINK TINK TINK of the spoon.

Sapatapa takes a sip of the coffee. Frowns.

SAPATAPA

You Americans have much to learn about coffee. Very bitter.

EATON

Shall I take it away?

Sapatapa grins - he enjoys this cat and mouse game.

SAPATAPA

(re: blank wall)

Did I ever extend the bey's gratitude for the mirror? We've made good use of it. He placed it in the private quarters of his pleasure barge.

EATON

Is that it, then? You've come for more? Perhaps you'd like my chair?

(MORE)

EATON (CONT'D)  
Or my desk? Or the shirt off my  
back?

SAPATAPA  
Is that what passes for  
hospitality in the American  
Consulate?  
(beat)  
No, I am not here for trifles. I'm  
here to offer you my services.

EATON  
And what services are those?

SAPATAPA  
Protection. Persuasion. You see,  
not everyone will agree with your  
decision to aid Hamet, the exiled  
bashaw of Tripoli.

EATON  
You're spying on me?

SAPATAPA  
You are not known for your  
subtlety, Master Eaton.  
(beat)  
No need to worry. I am sympathetic  
to your goals. I can make sure  
that others are also sympathetic.

EATON  
Is there no end to your baseness?  
Blackmail. Bribery. Extortion.  
What new depths of depravity will  
you plumb next?  
(beat, taking a breath)  
What will this protection cost?

SAPATAPA  
There was a time when you offered  
to give the bey ten thousand  
dollars. Do you recall?

EATON  
Yes. You called it a bribe and  
said it was beneath him to accept.

SAPATAPA  
And it was. But I am not the bey.

EATON  
You know I don't have the money.

SAPATAPA

Then I will add it to your debt.  
On top of the five thousand  
dollars you still owe me for the  
Italian slave girl.

(baiting)

A shame your country chose not to  
make the payment. And after  
everything you've done for them.

Eaton grinds his teeth. He chokes the arms of his chair.

EATON

And if I refuse to pay you?

SAPATAPA

Then I would be very concerned for  
the safety of the American consul  
to Tripoli. I believe that honor  
currently belongs to Master  
Cathcart?

EATON

You'll get your money.

SAPATAPA

When?

EATON

It will have to come from America.  
It will take time.

SAPATAPA

Very well. I'll wait for an  
American ship to deliver the  
money. I hope, for your sake, that  
the winds are favorable.

Sapatapa rises. He walks to the door and EXITS.

A beat. Then Eaton grabs Sapatapa's coffee cup and throws it  
against the wall. CRASH! It shatters into a thousand pieces.

He stands and walks down the hallway. He stops and looks into a  
bedroom - the bedroom where Barbara and Anna slept. It's empty  
now. Dark. Untouched. Eaton sighs and closes the door.

**EXT. HAMET'S CAMP - MIDNIGHT**

A SHADOW slips out of a white tent. It sneaks past a couple  
TURKISH GUARDS, darts across the open camp, and arrives at a  
group of hitched horses.

Now the shadow is on horseback, riding through the camp at top speed. The cowl of the shadow's cloak falls back, revealing the the face beneath - it's Hamet!

He spurs the horse onward, blowing past the Turkish guards. They make a half-hearted attempt to give chase. But Hamet is already too far gone.

Hamet leaves the camp in his dust. A smile spreads across his face. He looks reinvigorated. Alive.

Then he's gone, his silhouette swallowed up by the twinkling field of stars that yawns over the horizon.

**EXT. TUNIS HARBOR - MORNING**

An anchor SPLASHES into the water. This is the anchor of the USS CHESAPEAKE, a large American frigate.

**EXT. USS CHESAPEAKE - MAIN DECK**

Two SAILORS, one young and one old, ready a row boat. The YOUNG SAILOR nudges the OLD SAILOR. The old sailor cranes his head around and sees--

COMMODORE MORRIS (35), and his wife, ANNE MORRIS (26), EXIT the captain's quarters and stroll onto the deck. Commodore Morris finishes buttoning his coat.

YOUNG SAILOR

The Commodore and *The Commodore*  
have graced us with their  
presence.

Commodore Morris has the weak look of an academy man without enough salt in his hair. Anne has a doughy face and dull eyes.

OLD SAILOR

Must be nice having a woman to  
warm your bed each night.

YOUNG SAILOR

Based on their schedule, I'd say  
it's each night, each morning, and  
once or twice before supper.

OLD SAILOR

At this rate we'll never reach  
Tripoli.

Commodore Morris gives Anne a furtive peck on the lips.

YOUNG SAILOR (CONT'D)

I suppose she *is* quite beautiful.  
(MORE)

YOUNG SAILOR (CONT'D)

(beat)

When she's wearing a veil.

The two sailors share a quiet laugh.

**EXT. TUNIS - LA GOULETTE DOCKS - LATER**

La Goulette is the main port of entry for the city of Tunis. It's a thin strip of land that divides the Mediterranean Sea from the stagnant lake that leads to the city.

SLAVES and LABORERS load and unload boxes, crates, and chests from small boats. It's a bustling, noisy setting.

Eaton watches as Commodore Morris' row boat approaches. Then he clocks Anne Morris sitting beside the commodore. He bristles.

The boat docks and Commodore Morris turns to help Anne disembark. Eaton collects his courtesies and calls out to them.

EATON

Commodore Morris. Welcome to Tunis.

COMMODORE MORRIS

Mr. Eaton! How do you do?

EATON

Well, sir. I am yours.  
(re: Anne, playfully)  
Have I been away so long that women are now allowed in the navy?

COMMODORE MORRIS

Ah, very good. Mr. Eaton, I have the pleasure to introduce my wife, Anne. Anne, Consul-General Eaton.

Anne curtsies. Eaton bows. Then Anne wrinkles her nose.

ANNE MORRIS

Does the whole city smell this foul? How can you bear it?

EATON

I'm afraid this entire region is not well-suited to the dispositions of a fine lady such as yourself.

Anne glows at the compliment, but Eaton's glance at Commodore Morris makes it clear who the statement is intended for.

EATON (CONT'D)

I must admit I was surprised to learn of your plans to visit Tunis. I suspected your blockade of Tripoli would prohibit such excursions.

COMMODORE MORRIS

Merely a resupply errand. Though I would be remiss if I did not admit that I was hoping for a decent meal while ashore.

**INT. AMERICAN CONSULATE - DINING ROOM - EVENING**

LAUGHTER fills the candlelit dining room. A small feast is set for Eaton, Commodore Morris, and Anne. Spirits are high.

ANNE MORRIS

What happened next? They wouldn't let you in?

EATON

You must understand that the bey of Tunis is a man beholden to tradition. I explained, at length, to Sapatapa - his right hand man - that I could not remove my hat due to an inexplicable rash.

COMMODORE MORRIS

No doubt brought on by the conditions of this city.

EATON

Without a doubt. But they would not hear of it. A consul? Appearing before the magnificent bey of Tunis *avec un chapeau*? Sacrilege! You'd have thought I murdered his first born.

ANNE MORRIS

How barbaric.

(beat)

Seems he could learn a thing or two from Admiral Ball. His hospitality in Malta was exceptional. Wouldn't you say?

COMMODORE MORRIS

Yes, quite fine.

The question seems to make Commodore Morris uncomfortable. Eaton takes note.

EATON

How long were you at port in Malta?

ANNE MORRIS

A good spell. Admiral Ball was kind enough put us up in the governor's manse.

EATON

Is that so?

COMMODORE MORRIS

(flustered, downplaying)

Well, you see, with the quarantine period and the recent storms, the duration of our stay was longer than anticipated.

EATON

Oh? Was it also storms that kept you in Gibraltar for so long?

COMMODORE MORRIS

Indeed. The weather has been uncooperative in the pursuit of our agenda in Tripoli.

EATON

You would make an excellent farmer. A bounty of rain seems to follow you wherever you go.

Anne laughs, oblivious to the barbed subtext.

COMMODORE MORRIS

Perhaps when I retire.

(changing the subject)

Oh I meant to tell you that we received an interesting guest while in Malta. Said you sent him there. What was his name? Mahmoud?

ANNE MORRIS

Mmm I believe it was Ahmed.

EATON

(perking up)

Hamet?

COMMODORE MORRIS

Yes, that's it. Claimed to be the rightful bashaw of Tripoli or some such?

(MORE)

COMMODORE MORRIS (CONT'D)

Though everyone seems to be a prince in these parts.

EATON

He was in Malta? Did you give him aid?

COMMODORE MORRIS

Of course not. I could not be certain there was any truth to his tale. What he was suggesting seemed rather preposterous. You're acquainted with him? Truly?

EATON

Yes! And there's nothing preposterous about wanting to end the tyrannical practice of paying tribute to these pirate kings. Placing Hamet in power will do exactly that.

COMMODORE MORRIS

Under whose authority would we go about toppling foreign governments?

EATON

Mine, damnit!

The room quiets. Anne shifts uncomfortably in her seat. Eaton takes his knife and fork and furiously cuts his roast duck.

ANNE MORRIS

The duck is quite--

EATON

What in God's name are you doing here? The wife of a commodore has no business aboard a ship of war.

COMMODORE MORRIS

I'd ask you not to--

EATON

And you should be outside Tripoli. This is not some Mediterranean pleasure cruise. Have you even established a blockade? Have you harassed the enemy? My God, we'd have been better-served by a fleet of floating quaker houses.

Commodore Morris stands and throws his napkin on the table.



COMMODORE MORRIS  
 Enough! I will not suffer these  
 abuses. Come, Anne. Let us quit  
 this menace.

(to Eaton)  
 They'll be hearing about your  
 conduct in Washington.

They EXIT. After a beat, Eaton pours himself more wine.

**EXT. AMERICAN CONSULATE - MORNING**

SERVANTS load chests onto a carriage. Anne sits inside the carriage, pouting. Commodore Morris oversees the operation.

COMMODORE MORRIS  
 Gently, gently.

ANNE MORRIS  
 (leaning through window)  
 Have they almost finished? I'm  
 quite ready to depart.

COMMODORE MORRIS  
 Very near, darling. Very near.

**INT. AMERICAN CONSULATE - EATON'S OFFICE - SAME TIME**

Eaton hunches at his desk, scrawling out a letter like he's carving the words into stone.

COMMODORE MORRIS (O.S.)  
 (shouting)  
 What is the meaning of this?

Eaton drops the quill. He looks out the window. Alarm ripples across his face. He rushes out of the room.

**EXT. AMERICAN CONSULATE - MOMENTS LATER**

Twenty JANISSARIES, scimitars drawn, surround Commodore Morris.

COMMODORE MORRIS  
 I am the commodore of the United  
 States Mediterranean fleet. I  
 demand you answer me.

Eaton barrels out of the consulate.

EATON  
 Sheathe your swords this instant.

The janissaries don't budge. They look poised to strike.

SAPATAPA (O.S.)  
Master Commodore.

*Sapatapa.* He steps through the line of janissaries, his fingers steepled and his lips curled into a grin.

EATON  
Sapatapa. What are you playing at?

SAPATAPA  
By order of Bey Hamouda, you are being placed under arrest.

COMMODORE MORRIS  
Under what charges?

SAPATAPA  
(looking at Eaton)  
Unpaid debts.

**INT. BARDO PALACE - LATER**

Bey Hamouda sits on his sofa. Sapatapa stands at his side. Eaton and Commodore Morris face them, held at sword-point.

EATON  
This is unheard of, even in the history of Barbary outrage. My personal and my perceived debts should hold no bearing on the movements of the commodore.

SAPATAPA  
Then you should not have promised repayment upon the arrival of American ships.

EATON  
You know damn well that that is not what we agreed upon.

Sapatapa shrugs. Of course he knows.

COMMODORE MORRIS  
What are these debts that require repayment?

Sapatapa picks up a PARCHMENT. Reads from it.

SAPATAPA

Seven thousand dollars for passage between Tunis and Malta. Ten thousand dollars for the purposes of political intrigue. And five thousand dollars for the Italian slave girl, Anna Porcile.

EATON

This was necessary for the safety--  
The national interest demanded--  
To secure her freedom!

HAMOUDA

Silence!

Commodore Morris eyes Eaton with disgust - *a slave girl?*  
Hamouda gestures for Sapatapa to continue.

SAPATAPA

The sum total is twenty-two thousand dollars.

COMMODORE MORRIS

I demand you release me. I will not be held accountable for the careless and repugnant expenditures of our foreign agent.

(beat)

His personal debts are not, as he claims, in our national interest.

SAPATAPA

As you are now in our custody, it appears that paying these debts is very much in *your* interest.

EATON

Enough! You have taken every opportunity to frustrate my agenda and personally pillage me. You are no better than a common thief.

Bey Hamouda jumps to his feet. He trembles with rage.

HAMOUDA

You call him a thief? In my court? You have exhausted all my patience. I will turn you out of this country. And you will never return.

EATON

I would be glad of it! In my time here I have suffered only violence and indignity.

(MORE)

EATON (CONT'D)

(beat)

I have been an honest and just agent for my country. If you have such a terrible objection to my agency here, then speak it.

Hamouda cools. More than anything he looks tired.

HAMOUDA

(to Commodore Morris)

The consul is a man of a good heart, but a wrong head. He is too obstinate and too violent for me. I must have a consul with a disposition more congenial to Barbary interests.

COMMODORE MORRIS

We are in agreement on that.

(beat)

We will replace him immediately. And, in order to resolve this current disagreement, the United States will take on his debts.

(then, to Eaton)

Understanding that Mr. Eaton will surrender all his property, both real and personal, to stand as surety for the repayment.

Eaton looks around the court. There is not a single friendly face to be seen.

This moment is ripe for a classic Eaton eruption. Instead...

... he holds his head high and walks toward Hamouda. The janissaries move to stop him. Hamouda waves them off.

EATON

I want it to be known that we did not part on violent terms. I wish you wisdom and good fortune in your reign.

Eaton steps forward and holds out his hand. Hamouda considers for a beat and then takes it. They shake.

HAMOUDA

Though I have never met a man half as mad as you, you hold my respect. I wish for your good fortune, as well.

**INT. AMERICAN CONSULATE - SITTING ROOM - MORNING**

Eaton strolls through the room, touches the back of an arm chair, looks up at the ceiling, and finally rests his gaze upon the blank wall with the cracked stucco.

A wistful smile plays across his lips.

Then he picks up his hat, walks to the door and, with one final look back at the room, EXITS.

**EXT. MERCHANT SHIP PERSEVERANCE - DECK - MORNING**

Eaton gazes at Tunis as it shrinks in the distance.

MATTHEW (O.S.)

Have you ever been in a battle?

Eaton turns to find MATTHEW JOHNSON (16) looking up at him. Matthew is a gangly youth with greasy blonde hair.

EATON

How old are you?

MATTHEW

Sixteen, sir.

EATON

Sixteen. That's the age I was when I left my home to join the army.

MATTHEW

(lighting up)

That's what I'd like to do. Well, enlist in the navy, that is.

EATON

Why don't you?

Matthew glances back at the CAPTAIN on the upper deck.

MATTHEW

My father won't allow it. Wants me to be the next captain of this ship. But I don't want to be a merchant my whole life.

EATON

Then don't. If we all did what our fathers wanted, the world would be a dull place filled with weak men.

MATTHEW

It isn't that easy.

EATON  
It's not supposed to be.

MATTHEW  
(downcast)  
I should have enlisted when they were looking for men to crew the Philadelphia. Now *that's* a ship.

EATON  
They're sending the Philadelphia to the Mediterranean?

MATTHEW  
Aye, sir.

Eaton nods approvingly.

EATON  
I'm pleased to hear it. That's the type of ship we need for this war. Captain Decatur is an exceptional commander.

MATTHEW  
It's not Captain Decatur in command, sir.

EATON  
Oh? Who have they chosen?

MATTHEW  
Captain Bainbridge, sir.

Eaton's expression curdles. *Are you fucking kidding me?*

HARD CUT TO:

**EXT. USS PHILADELPHIA - UPPER DECK - MORNING**

Captain Bainbridge, looking as smug as ever, raises a SPYGLASS to his eye.

SPYGLASS POV: A small GUNBOAT is 400 yards ahead.

BAINBRIDGE  
They're almost within range of our carronades.

Midshipman Taylor stands beside him, nervous but excited.

TAYLOR  
Is it a Tripolitan gunboat?

BAINBRIDGE

They won't simply raise the flag  
of Tripoli to announce themselves.  
If they were our friends, they  
would not be trying to outrun us.  
(handing him the spyglass)  
See for yourself.

Taylor raises the spyglass. After a beat...

TAYLOR

They're raising a flag, sir.

BAINBRIDGE

And which false flag have they  
chosen? Perhaps they'll try to  
pass for Portuguese merchants?

TAYLOR

It's... well, it's the flag of  
Tripoli, sir.

BAINBRIDGE

What? You're certain?

Taylor lowers the spyglass.

TAYLOR

Yes. I'm all too certain.

BAINBRIDGE

Let me see that.

Bainbridge rips the spyglass away and peers through. Then he  
lowers it and marches to the railing overlooking the main deck.

BAINBRIDGE

Lieutenant Porter!

Below, Porter turns at his name and looks up at Bainbridge.

BAINBRIDGE (CONT'D)

They've announced themselves as  
the enemy.

PORTER

Permission to obliterate them,  
sir?

BAINBRIDGE

Permission granted.  
(beat)  
But keep it floating. I want to  
claim it as a prize.

PORTER

She'll make a fine prize, captain.

On a dime, Porter switches to enforcer mode. He storms along the deck and bellows at the CREW. He has a noticeable limp that gives a monstrous severity to his movement.

PORTER

Ready the carronades! Load the cannons! Full sail! Laggards will get a lick with the cat 'o nines!

And just like that, the ship swarms with activity. The crew moves with mechanical efficiency. Men SCURRY up ropes. Sails UNFURL. Cannons are PLUNGED with powder.

The Philadelphia ROARS across the water. It gains on the small Tripolitan gunboat.

Porter arrives at the forecastle. The CARRONADES - stout, snub-nosed cannons mounted at the head of the ship - are ready and waiting. Two GUNNERS stand at attention.

PORTER

Let them have it.

The gunners waste no time. They light the fuse and--

KA-BOOM!

The first cannonball of the battle hurtles toward the gunboat. Smoke billows from the carronade, smothering the entire deck in a cloud of acrid gunpowder dust.

PLUNK. The cannonball hits the water well short of the target.

PORTER (CONT'D)

Keep firing until you hear their hull splinter.

On the upper deck, Taylor looks concerned. He starts to speak. Stops himself. Then works up the courage to say--

TAYLOR

Sir, if I may?  
(off Bainbridge's nod)  
They're laying in along the shore.  
If we pursue, the water may prove to be too shallow.

BAINBRIDGE

If we do not give direct pursuit, they will evade us.

(MORE)



BAINBRIDGE (CONT'D)

I will not allow us to suffer another humiliation in these waters.

TAYLOR

Sir, on our last cruise, it was high tide and--

BAINBRIDGE

Since you know so much about these waters, *midshipman*, perhaps you would like to set our course?

TAYLOR

No, sir. I simply--

KA-BOOM! Another carronade shot fires off.

Porter climbs the stairs and arrives at the upper deck.

PORTER

We're closing the distance, but the devils are leading us into the shallows. They take us for fools.

Taylor keeps his head down to conceal his smirk.

BAINBRIDGE

We cannot change course now. Not while we have our foot on their throats.

PORTER

Captain, I--

BAINBRIDGE

Take depth readings if you must.

Porter stomps down to the main deck.

PORTER

Midshipman York! Gather men to take depth readings.

EDWARD YORK (18) has the snooty look of a prep school tattletale. He salutes Porter with gusto.

YORK

Aye aye, sir.

York hoofs it belowdecks. Porter climbs the rungs on the mizzen mast. Halfway up the rigging he stops and lifts a spyglass.

SPYGLASS POV: The gunboat hugs the coast. Beyond it, Tripoli comes into view. We see the castle... and the gun batteries.

**INT. USS PHILADELPHIA - GUN DECK - MOMENTS LATER**

York bursts into the low-ceilinged gun deck. The length of the hull is lined with cannons, packed tight like sardines. The GUNNERS come to attention when they see York enter.

Except one man. WILLIAM RAY (32), gentle and bookish, scribbles in a small JOURNAL. He's oblivious to York's presence. Until--

YORK

Mr. Ray. Explain yourself.

Ray leaps to his feet and salutes.

RAY

Sir. I am awaiting orders to commence firing.

YORK

Your orders were to stand at the ready. Not to write a poem about the attack. You're lucky you haven't been given the rope's-end for your constant insubordination.  
(beat)

Come. Since you're incapable of fulfilling your duty here, I've a task for you above-decks.

RAY

Aye, sir.

YORK

And put that damned journal away. The other sailors might confuse you for someone of importance.

**EXT. TRIPOLI HARBOR**

The Philadelphia's sails ripple in the gusty wind. Water foams against its mighty hull. The ship moves at an extraordinary clip. But the gunboat is still just outside a guaranteed range.

KA-BOOM! A carronade shot SPLASHES into the water beside the gunboat. A near hit. Frustratingly close.

**ON DECK**

Ray carries a LEAD LINE, a depth-marking tool comprised of a lead weight attached to a rope that has colored leather knots every 6 feet to indicate individual fathoms.

He heaves the lead-line over the railing. It PLUNKS into the water. The weight drags the rope deeper and deeper. Then stops.

RAY  
(counting)  
Eight fathoms!

He starts tugging the rope out of the water. He strains against the weight of the lead and the force of the water.

York turns and calls out the reading to Porter.

YORK  
Eight fathoms!

Porter, still in the mizzen mast rigging, nods. He holds up 8 fingers to Bainbridge.

BAINBRIDGE  
You see? Plenty deep.

TAYLOR  
(unconvinced)  
Aye, it's as you said, sir.

KA-BOOM! A carronade fires. A jet of water splashes onto the gunboat's decks. The gunboat rocks unsteadily in the waves.

BAINBRIDGE  
We have them now. And close enough  
to shore for the bashaw to see.

At the forecastle, Ray throws the lead line into the water.

RAY  
Five fathoms!

YORK  
Five fathoms!

Porter holds up 5 fingers. Bainbridge blanches.

TAYLOR  
Sir, five fathoms is--

BAINBRIDGE  
I'm well aware.

Bainbridge grapples internally with the situation. It looks like it's tearing him apart. After a difficult beat--

BAINBRIDGE (CONT'D)  
(sotto)  
Curse these pirates.  
(MORE)

BAINBRIDGE (CONT'D)  
 (calling out to Porter)  
 Fire one more round of the  
 carronades and then heave hard to  
 port!

PORTER  
 (relieved)  
 Aye, sir!  
 (to the gunners)  
 Fire!

KA-BOOM! SPLASH! Another near miss. Damn.

Ray hurls the lead line overboard. It PLUNKS into the water.  
And then it abruptly stops.

Ray clocks the leather marking. *Oh shit.* He turns and yells.

RAY  
 Two fath--

**CRRRRRRRUUUUUNNNNCH**

The hull of the ship grinds against a REEF OF CALCIFIED ROCK.  
 In an instant, the world is thrown into chaos.

Ray SLAMS into the railing.

Porter is THROWN from the mizzen mast.

Bainbridge and Taylor CRASH onto the deck.

The bow of the USS Philadelphia lurches skyward like a  
 breaching whale.

LOW ANGLE: The hull towers above us. It eclipses the sun. Then,  
 like the closing maw of a leviathan, it comes crashing back  
 down upon us, swallowing us whole as we--

CUT TO BLACK

END OF EPISODE